

VLR- 9/18/73 NRHP- 1/11/74

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Complete all entries - complete applicable sections

STATE:	Virginia
COUNTY:	Chesterfield
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME	
COMMON:	Swift Creek Playhouse
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Swift Creek Mill

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 41; East side of U. S. Route 1			
CITY OR TOWN: Colonial Heights vicinity		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Third; David E. Satterfield, III	
STATE Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: Chesterfield	CODE 041

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Playhouse Restaurant

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY	
OWNER'S NAME: Mr. & Mrs. Wamer J. Callahan, Jr. (see continuation sheet)	
STREET AND NUMBER: 1110 Oakwood Drive	
CITY OR TOWN: Colonial Heights	STATE: Virginia
	CODE 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION	
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Chesterfield County Court House	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN: Chesterfield	STATE: Virginia
	CODE 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS	
TITLE OF SURVEY: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey	
DATE OF SURVEY: 1973	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission	
STREET AND NUMBER: 221 Governor Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE: Virginia
	CODE 51

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE	Virginia
COUNTY	Chesterfield
ENTRY NUMBER	
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ Excellent☒ Good☐ Fair☐ Deteriorated☐ Ruins☐ Unexposed

(Check One)

(Check One)

☒ Altered☐ Unaltered

(Check One)

☐ Moved☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Swift Creek Mill is a brick grist mill set on a high, uncoursed rubble stone foundation. In 1965 the building was converted into a dinner theatre, but with little compromise to its scenic quality.

The building's brick portion is laid in five-course American bond, indicating a mid-nineteenth century date for this fabric. The stone ground floor and basement levels may incorporate fabric from the original mill erected on the site in the late-seventeenth century. Most other surviving early fabric such as windows, doors and structural timbers appear to be mid-nineteenth century work.

The mill is covered by an unusually shallow gable roof which could replace an earlier one of more conventional proportions.

The four-bay west elevation or front contains doors in the inner bays of the ground floor. Above the north doorway is a loading doorway which, like the opening below, contains a nail-studded batten door. The windows throughout the west wall have six-over-six sash (most of which is restored), and are topped with flat wooden lintels. As part of the conversion of the second story into a theatre, the windows on that level have been backed permanently. The east elevation or rear has a window and door arrangement similar to the west elevation although the second floor windows have been bricked up. Two early doors, one a two section batten door survive on the ground floor. Flood damage has caused the rebuilding of sections of the south wall, however, the mill race and turbine machinery are intact on this side. The turbine apparently was installed in the late-nineteenth century to replace a mill wheel. A wooden shed addition sheltering the turbine was removed when the south wall was most recently stabilized. The north wall is largely hidden by a brick and stone modern but architecturally sympathetic addition housing stairs, toilets, kitchen, and other facilities necessary to the current function.

Although the interior has been remodeled extensively, its rustic atmosphere has not been sacrificed. This atmosphere is enhanced by the retention of much of the early structural timbers as well as some of the machinery, including two sets of mill stones in their original casings.

Despite the heavy commercial development in the area, the mill property is still wooded and provides a handsome setting. Just to the north is a small, mid-nineteenth century brick mill store with gable-end front and a stepped parapet gable. An unusual feature is the parapet's top step incorporating a chimney. Swift Creek with its large dam is immediately to the south, and U.S. Route 1 passes to the west.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

CCL

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☒ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☒ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☐ Industry☐ Philosophy☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☒ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art☐ Architecture☐ Social/Human-☒ Commerce☐ Literature☐ Italian☐ Communications☒ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A mill has been located at Swift Creek Mill for over three hundred years, and the massive stone foundations of the present structure may incorporate fabric from the original mill erected by Henry Randolph between 1657 and 1666. This present building in its picturesque setting formed by the dammed creek and wooded banks is practically the only early structure remaining on the now heavily developed historic Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (U.S. 1).

The earliest mention of a mill at this location appears in a 1666 patent to John Wilson which gives as a reference point a spot "...about 100 paces above Mr. Randolph's Mill." Randolph immigrated to Virginia in 1623 and acquired the mill site in a 150 acre tract patented in 1657. Randolph apparently operated the mill both as a merchant mill and a plantation mill as it was adjacent to his plantation "Bloomsbury". It continued to be known as Randolph's Mill until 1804 when ownership was transferred from Richard Bland Randolph to William Rowlett. It then came to be known as Rowlett's Mill until sold in 1852 by the heir of William Rowlett's son, Peter, to the Swift Creek Manufacturing Company. It may be during this period that the mill was largely rebuilt since most of the superstructure dates from the mid-nineteenth century.

Civil War action was centered around the mill on May 10, 1864, when Union General Benjamin F. Butler's Army of the James attempted a crossing at Swift Creek in a move against General Pickett's men on the south bank. The battle site extended from Brander's Bridge to the west, to Ellerslie Plantation on the east.

Following the war the mill was used as a distillery for corn whiskey as well as a grist mill and was known as Schmidt's Distillery. This designation ceased in 1872 when the owner lost the property through lack of tax payment. In 1929, after passing through several additional owners, the mill was acquired by Amanda Percival who renamed it Swift Creek Mill. Milling operations were continued by the Percival family into the 1950's.

In recent years the building has been successfully and sympathetically converted into a playhouse and restaurant. It stands as a good example of a successful adaptive use of a historic structure whose original function is no longer feasible.

CCL

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chesterfield County Deed Books: 17, p. 43; 20, p. 110; and 40, p. 518.

Nugent, Nell, Cavaliers and Pioneers, Baltimore: 1963.

Unpublished ms. in archives of Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		37 17 00	77 0 24	
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0			41 0 0	
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2 acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:		Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff	
ORGANIZATION	DATE	August, 1973	
STREET AND NUMBER:		221 Governor Street	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE	
Richmond	Virginia	51	

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name

Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
Title

Date

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

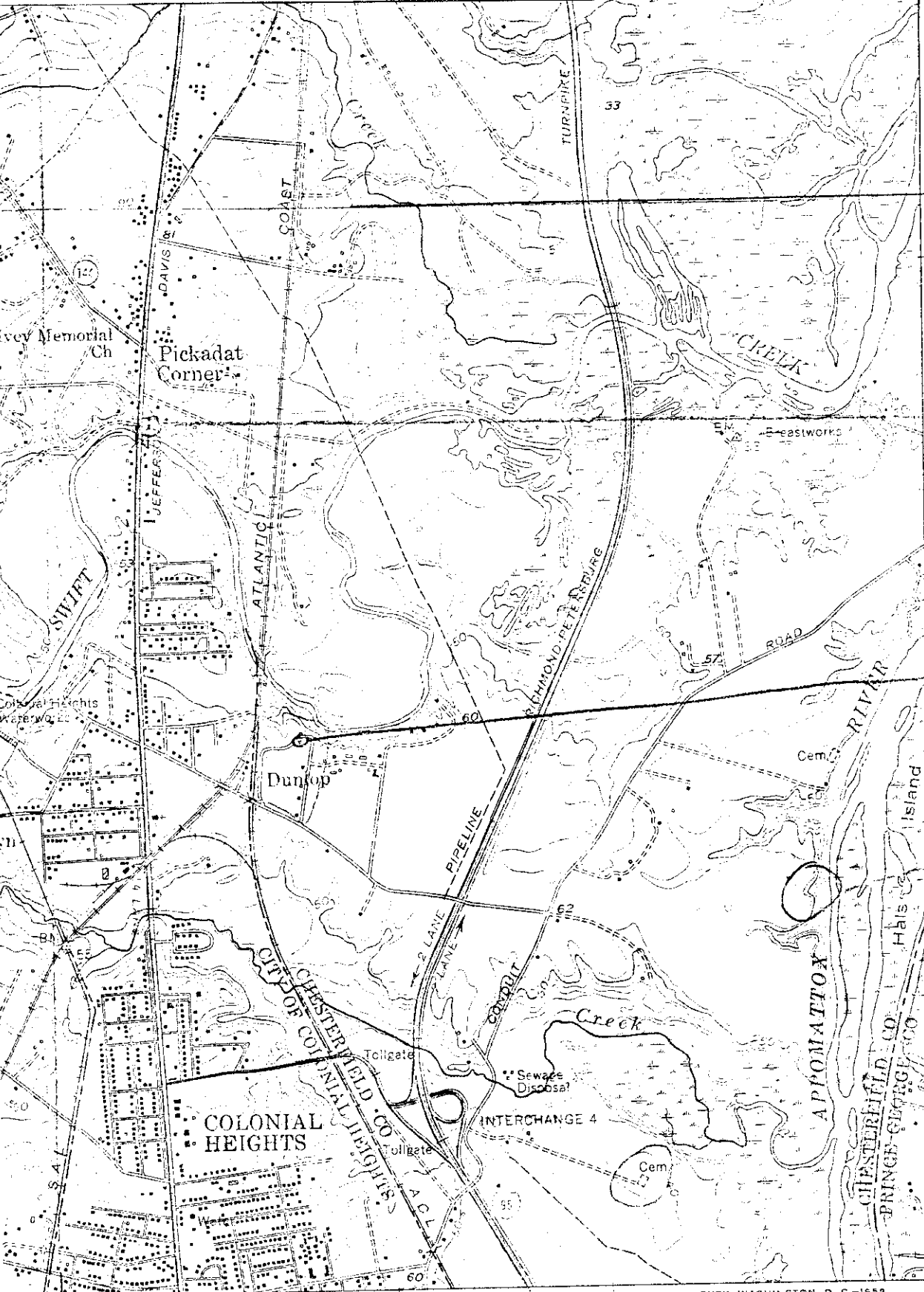
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Chesterfield	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

4.

Dr. & Mrs. Louis Rubin
1570 Brandon Avenue
Petersburg, Virginia



South of
Bermuda Hundred
37° 27' 00"
Longitude
77° 24' 40"
S.E.

CENTERED
in map book

4126000m. N.

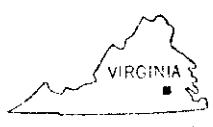
37° 15'
77° 22' 30"

(PRINCE GEORGE)

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C., 1959
MR 0449 289000m. E.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Heavy-duty | ————— | Light-duty | ----- |
| Medium-duty | ----- | Unimproved dirt | |
| Interstate Route | ⊕ | U. S. Route | ⊙ |
| State Route | ⊙ | | |



CHESTER, VA.

SW/4 BERMUDA HUNDRED 15' QUADRANGLE
N 2715 W 7722 5/12 5